



## *State of Wyoming Military Department Office of the Adjutant General*

*5500 Bishop Boulevard  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3320  
<http://www.wy.ngb.army.mil>*

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#### **Media contacts:**

Deidre Forster (307) 772-5253; cell (307) 631-4153; email [deidre.forster@wy.ngb.army.mil](mailto:deidre.forster@wy.ngb.army.mil).  
Master Sgt. Trudy Woodcock (307) 772-5229; email [trudy.woodcock@wy.ngb.army.mil](mailto:trudy.woodcock@wy.ngb.army.mil).  
Spc. Christian Venhuizen (307) 772-5040; e-mail [christian.venhuizen@wy.ngb.army.mil](mailto:christian.venhuizen@wy.ngb.army.mil).

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## **Fire Protection and Cultural Awareness top Wyo. National Guard and Native American consultation meetings**

CAMP GUERNSEY, Wyo. – The Wyoming Army National Guard is working on plans to protect sacred Native American sites from fires at the state's largest training facility, Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center.

It was a hot topic for discussion between the Wyoming Army National Guard and representatives from Native American tribes during a three-day consultation at the camp.

Maj. Sam House, Wyoming Army National Guard environmental protection specialist, said there is a plan being developed. Proposals include more prescribed burns and clearing trees out of the buffer zone surrounding impact zones for munitions. "We're trying to take down the fuels so that way, when the fire starts burning, we can control it easier," he said.

House also recommended a full time archeologist/tribal liaison be stationed at Camp Guernsey.

The discussion about fire protection comes on the heels of this past June's 14,000-acre Tracer Fire. The fire ignited from a tracer round fired during a training exercise in the camp's North Training Area.

"It's unfortunate during past meetings we never predicted there would be an unfortunate fire," said Terry Gray of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. He said he understands

the difference between protecting lives and protecting historical and religious sites. "Maybe let certain (cultural) areas burn...If it were in my tribe's best interest, they would put safety first."

The Wyoming Army National Guard still wants to make sure those Native American sites remain protected

"To have the support in the highest levels of command is just invaluable to us," said Karen Kempton, cultural resources manager with the Wyoming Army National Guard. "We look at this consultation as a partnership."

That partnership is also finding ways to increase protection from treasure and souvenir hunters while increasing cultural awareness.

"I've seen the Army treat us, my nation, as an equal partner," Gray said. "I see things going really well."

A video showing some of the culturally important areas on the Camp Guernsey property and explaining the importance of not disturbing them was reviewed during the consultation. Other ideas explored included the use of signs to keep guests away from sensitive areas.

House said the Wyoming Army National Guard will continue to seek the advice of Native American tribes with connections to Camp Guernsey.